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The Church of the Creator: Creed of Hate

Introduction

Since 1973, the Church of the Creator (COTC) has been a virulently anti-Semitic and racist organization that uses the rhetoric of religion as a flimsy camouflage for the promotion of hate. Its founder and longtime leader, the late Ben Klassen, a far-right political activist in the 1960s, gloried in the concept he fervently and frequently proclaimed as his goal: racial holy war."

COTC propaganda is as hostile toward Christianity as it is toward Judaism; as hateful toward Blacks and other people of color as it is toward Jews. At this time, while its numbers are relatively small -- membership comprises less than a thousand -- it has been growing. Yet the danger it poses and the concern it merits derive from factors beyond mere numbers. Disturbing recent developments include:

- * several COTC members have been convicted of, or are being tried for, serious violent crimes, including murder -- most recently, in July 1993, authorities uncovered two separate plots involving West Coast COTC members in efforts to firebomb Jewish and Black institutions and assassinate prominent Jews and African-Americans;

- * the group has close ties to other violence-prone extremist factions, including Tom Metzger's White Aryan Resistance and William Pierce's National Alliance, as well as to neo-Nazi Skinheads

- * two of Klassen's announced successors have been convicted of felony offenses -- one of them recently completed 6 years in a federal prison, while the other recently began a federal prison term following 9 bombing convictions;

- * COTC activists operate beyond the U.S., in such countries as Canada, England, Sweden, and South Africa, extending the group's reach and providing it with international recruiting and propaganda outlets.

Over the past three years, COTC membership and influence appear to

have increased among white supremacists. This increase is particularly attributable to COTC activity involving the youngest and most violence-prone segment of the extremist underworld, the neo-Nazi Skinheads.

The affiliation of these Skinheads with the COTC (and other established groups, particularly White Aryan Resistance) has coincided with a marked increase in violent, racist activity in the U.S. It is important to expose groups like COTC whose writings shape the beliefs and inspire the behavior of many of these young thugs.

It is hoped that this report will enhance public awareness of the Church of the Creator, a viciously hateful and potentially violent organization whose self-expressed aim is nothing less than the fomenting of a worldwide racially based war.

The Creator of The Church of the Creator

Ben Klassen, the founder of the Church of the Creator, was born on February 20, 1918, in Taurida, Ukraine. When he was six, his family moved to Mexico, and two years later re-settled in rural Saskatchewan, Canada. As an adult, Klassen taught elementary school in Canada, then worked as an electrical engineer in California. He also worked as a part-time inventor, reportedly earning a patent for an electric can opener in 1954.

In 1958, Klassen moved to Florida, where he became a successful real estate agent. The first indication of his political views came to light in 1965, when he was elected as a Republican to the Florida State Legislature. At the time, he had campaigned against busing and the federal government -- conventional conservative positions of the day. James Eddy, a GOP leader in the Florida House at the time, said of Klassen, "He was a good legislator.... Most of his votes were well-reasoned."

After his legislative district was reapportioned by court order, Klassen ran unsuccessfully for state senator in 1967. He next served as Florida chairman of Alabama governor George Wallace's 1968 independent presidential campaign. (Wallace was, of course, leading segregationist figure at the time.)

Concurrent with his brief involvement with the democratic process, Klassen at the time was closely affiliated with the ultra-right John Birch Society; in 1966 he was introduced at the Society's eighth annual dinner by the group's founder and leader, Robert Welch. He later donated \$1000 for a lifetime membership, and opened a Birch-affiliated American Opinion Bookstore.

Klassen's lurch ever-rightward became even more apparent, however, by the end of the decade, when he accused George Wallace of intentionally

courting African-American support, terming it "a complete betrayal of what he represented." He also later denounced the John Birch Society as a "smokescreen for the Jews."

New "Church," Old Hatred

In 1973, Klassen founded the Church of the Creator in Lighthouse Point, Florida. At the same time, he published its first manifesto, Nature's Eternal Religion. He proclaimed in the 511-page screed: "We completely reject the Judeo-democratic-Marxist values of today and supplant them with new and basic values. of which race is the foundation." Klassen contrasted his new religion, "Creativity," with Christianity, which he termed a "suicidal religion."

For much of the '70s, Klassen achieved little recognition for his self-created theology. Then, in 1979, he began mailing unsolicited copies of a booklet titled "The Brutal Truth About Inflation and Financial Enslavement -- The Federal Reserve Board -- The Most Gigantic Counterfeiting Ring in the World." The essay alleged that "the Federal Reserve Banks are owned, lock, stock and barrel, by a criminal gang of International Bankers" and claimed, The Federal Reserve owns the U.S. Government and manipulates it like a puppet, solely for the interests of this avaricious international gang of Jewish jackals, who control the world, its money, and its economy.

Klassen's pamphlet concludes, "Now that you understand the Jewish program of piracy, looting and enslavement by means of the Federal Reserve and money manipulations, now get the rest of the story and the program of The Church of the Creator by reading their White Man's Bible: Nature's Eternal Religion."

Klassen continued these apparently random mailings for much of the next decade.

In 1981, the COTC founder published a sequel to Nature's Eternal Religion, titled The White Man's Bible. This 453 page book revealed such key Klassen teachings as:

- * "Today's Black Plague is spelled niggers.... We regard them as subhuman or humanoid....

- * The most deadly threat the White Race faces is the tremendous expansion of the mud [i.e., "non-white"] races led by the arch-enemy -- the treacherous Jew....

- * We...declare everlasting war on the Jews, a war to the finish, until we have expelled them from all the lands inhabited by the white race."

A Moving Experience

Thereafter, in May 1982, COTC announced the construction of new

headquarters in Mulberry, North Carolina, three miles from the Georgia state line. Klassen chose the new site because he believed Florida had become too dangerous. "I think South Florida is due for a lot of turmoil

when bloody fighting breaks out," he stated. "Actually, I expect the financial collapse of the entire country, and blood will be flowing in the streets."

By 1983, the North Carolina compound was completed, and Klassen opened a post office box in Otto, North Carolina. Now describing himself as COTC's "Pontifex Maximus" (Latin for "high priest"), Klassen began publishing a gutter-level monthly tabloid called Racial Loyalty.

More books later flowed from the Klassen pen. In 1985, COTC published Expanding Creativity, an anthology of articles from Racial Loyalty. The following year saw the publication of a second collection. Building Whiter And Brighter World. In mid-1987, the Church published Rahowa! This Planet is All Ours. The term "rahowa" (taken from "racial holy war") itself was intended to be a COTC battle cry in the group's genocidal quest for world domination. In the book, Klassen declared:

RAHOWA! In this one word we sum up the total goal and program of not only the Church of the Creator, but of the total White Race, and it is this: We take up the challenge. We gird for total war against the Jews and the rest of the goddamned mud races of the world -- politically, militantly, financially, morally and religiously. In fact, we regard it as the heart of our religious creed, and as the most sacred credo of all. We regard it as a holy war to the finish -- a racial holy war. Rahowa! is INEVITABLE. It is the Ultimate and Only solution. [emphasis in original]

The ominous and threatening tone continued with a dire prediction:

No longer can the mud races and the White Race live on the same planet and survive. It is now either them or us. We want to make damn sure it is we who survive. This planet is from now on all ours, and will be the one and only habitat for our future progeny for all time to come.

In 1991, Klassen codified the "Creator" philosophy in a catechism titled The Little White Book -- clearly, yet astonishingly, inspired by the little red book of Mao-Tse Tung. His final publication, released in 1993, was an autobiographical work, Trials, Tribulations and Triumphs.

Growing Recognition in the Hate Business

As Klassen cranked these writings out, the COTC name grew within the white supremacist movement -- particularly among its youngest and most violence-prone adherents -- throughout the '80s. By the start of the next decade, groups of neo-Nazi skinheads began congregating at COTC headquarters for indoctrination and weapons training.

According to a September 1992 article in Mirabella magazine, the "seventeen-acre landscaped compound...includes small-arms firing ranges, paramilitary barracks and other buildings.... Inside a large converted barn that serves as headquarters, church founder and leader, Ben Klassen... sits beneath a large painted portrait of Adolf Hitler, 'The greatest leader the white race ever had,' says Klassen.... Since 1990 groups of committed young men have traveled here for extensive political mining under Klassen's tutelage. The recruits wear white berets or cowboy hats, live in the barracks and practice shooting with automatic weapons on the firing range. Many are older teenagers. 'Exceptional boys,' Klassen calls them."

COTC's growth was attributable in part to the simultaneous, though only temporary, decline of Tom Metzger's White Aryan Resistance (WAR) organization. which throughout the '80s exerted the greatest influence among neo-Nazi skinheads, as it again does today. In 1990, an Oregon jury found Metzger and his son John liable for inciting a group of skinheads to murder an Ethiopian immigrant. (The civil suit was brought on behalf of the victim's family by the Southern Poverty Law Center and ADL") As a result, the Metzgers were ordered to pay a \$12.5 million penalty. They also suffered a loss of prestige in the skinhead underworld when an investigation of their finances during pre-trial discovery revealed that they had used WAR funds to purchase personal items, such as the elder Metzger's toupee. COTC reaped the benefits of this disenchantment, picking up substantial new membership from former WAR chapters.

As COTC's membership swelled, so did its rhetoric of violence (as well as the number of violent acts, detailed elsewhere in this report, allegedly committed by COTC members). Klassen -- quite possibly fearing a civil suit similar to the case against Metzger -- spent much of 1992 looking for a successor to take over the Church. In September 1992, the Asheville, North Carolina, Citizen-Times reported that Klassen had sold the COTC compound for \$100,000 to William Pierce.

Pierce, a former officer in George Lincoln Rockwell's original American Nazi Party, is the head of another neo-Nazi group, the National Alliance. His connection with Klassen came as no surprise: like Klassen,

Pierce is a recluse, living on a 346-acre West Virginia compound he calls the Cosmotheist Community. Moreover, like Klassen, Pierce is a bitterly hateful opponent of Christianity.

According to an unsolicited mailing sent to subscribers of Racial Loyalty in April 1993, Pierce once told his followers, "Any Alliance member who is also a member of a church or other Christian organization which supports racial mixing or Zionism should decide now where he stands, and should then resign either from his church or from the Alliance." Prior to their formal real estate transaction, Klassen had promoted his fellow white supremacist by advertising two grisly Pierce novels in Racial Loyalty, The Turner Diaries -- which provided the blueprint for a series of terrorist acts in the 1980s by the Order, an offshoot of the National Alliance and the Aryan Nations -- and Hunter, the sequel to The Turner Diaries.

In March 1993, Pierce announced that he was putting up the COTC property for sale again, this time asking for \$299,900. To date, no one has responded to this offer.

Other Extremist Links to the COTC

Beyond Ben Klassen's financial ties to William Pierce, the COTC's path has intersected with assorted other white supremacists and right-wing extremists over the years. Principal among these connections was Klassen's relationship with Tom Metzger; for example, in January 1985, a letter from Klassen invited Metzger to form a COTC group in California, suggesting that he would appoint Metzger to "a higher title (equivalent to a bishop, cardinal, etc. in the Catholic Church, except we would come up with some Latin name for it)... which would provide prestige and some legal protection." Klassen reprinted the letter in a 1989 issue of Racial Loyalty, reiterating the offer.

On both occasions, Metzger rebuffed Klassen, yet he apparently retained respect for the like-minded COTC leader. In an August 1993 telephone message, Metzger stated, "It is with deep regret to announce [sic] the death of a long-time fighter for the cause, Ben Klassen.... Tom Metzger and Ben Klassen had a somewhat stormy relationship. Ben was not the easiest person to get along with. However, his dedication and sacrifice should be noted by even his strongest critics." The following week, Metzger promoted the two main COTC "religious" manuals, Nature's Eternal Religion and The White Man's Bible, in his next telephone address.

In May 1992, Racial Loyalty published an essay by David Lane on "the

Christian Right-wing American Patriots, C.R.A.P. (since that is what they do to [sic] the future of all White children)." Lane, 54, was a member of the far-right terrorist group known as The Order, who is currently serving a 40-year racketeering sentence, as well as a 150-year term for civil rights violation in connection with the 1984 murder of a Denver, Colorado, Jewish radio personality, Allen Berg. (Lane had driven the getaway car in the killing.)

More recently, current COTC leader Rick McCarty has appointed as his Florida state director Mike McCaffrey, whose extremist career includes a stint as producer of the neo-Nazi public access TV show "Race and Reason," hosted by Florida hatermonger Herb Poinsett. (The program itself is a spin-off of a Tom Metzger public access series, also called "Race and Reason.")

In addition, Racial Loyalty has printed a number of encouraging letters from Holocaust-deniers affiliated with the Institute for Historical Review (IHR). This pseudo-scholarly "Institute" is closely tied to Liberty Lobby, the most important anti-Semitic propaganda outfit in the U.S., founded and led by longtime Jew hater Willis Carto. The willingness of these Holocaust "revisionists" to endorse the Church of the Creator's genocidal rhetoric further betrays the lie that these propagandists are engaged in an "objective" search for truth. Among the deniers who have written to the COTC tabloid are Martin A. Larson and Revilo P. Oliver, both of whom serve on the "Editorial Advisory Committee" of IHR's Journal of Historical Review, and Carlos Porter, the author of such books as Made in Russia: The Holocaust, distributed by IHR.

In addition to these long-standing advocates of the Holocaust "revisionist" cause, a more recent associate of the IHR, David Cole, published a letter in the July 1989 issue of Racial Loyalty. The producer of a grotesque 1992 IHR video about the Auschwitz concentration camp, Cole wrote to the COTC. "I am very happy to become a member of the Church of the Creator.... Creativity gives my Race meaning and, therefore, gives my whole life meaning.... My work as a video producer puts me in touch with many other White Men who are looking to wrestle away the mass media from its Jew controllers and use the media to further the goals of the White Race." However, Cole's more recent prominence in IHR circles, which seek to mask the anti-Semitic intent of their propaganda, is directly attributable to his claim of being Jewish.

Nonetheless, COTC has also made a number of enemies in the typically fractious extremist community. The most vociferous of these detractors include the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, led by "Pastor" Thom Robb; the Knights, who dress up their racist and anti-Semitic agenda with David Duke-inspired euphemisms promoting "White, Christian values," despise the Church of the Creator's virulent rejection of Christianity. An equally hostile feud has taken place between Ben Klassen and Harold Covington, a North Carolina-based neo-Nazi whose most recent affiliation has been with a British right-wing terrorist group, Combat 18. The rivalry accounted for a bilious exchange of obscenities, taunts, and threats between the two hatemongers and their supporters. For example, the January 1992 Racial Loyalty printed, "AN OPEN LETTER TO THE JEW BASTARD [Covington] THAT SENT THE PORNOGRAPHIC POST CARD CONDEMNING OUR PONTIFEX MAXIMUS THROUGH THE MAIL!...if I could ever be so lucky to meet you, I promise I'll trim your wick."

Death of the High Priest

The sale of the COTC property was virtually the last public act by Klassen; for the last six months of 1992, he limited his contact with supporters to periodic letters announcing the abrupt dismissal or sudden elevation of a new member as "Pontifex Maximus." On August 6, 1993, Klassen committed suicide by consuming four bottles of sleeping pills. His body (along with a hand-written suicide note) was discovered on August 8 by his daughter. The farewell letter justified his act by referring to chapter 59 of The White Man's Bible, which describes suicide as "an honorable and dignified way to die for any...of a number of reasons, such as having come to the decision that life is no longer worthwhile."

Charges of Extreme Violence

Two recent cases on the West Coast are worthy of examination in order to illustrate the nature and consequences of the COTC program of violent hate.

The Los Angeles Plot

On July 15, 1993, federal and local police agents in Los Angeles, California, arrested eight individuals, some of whom had ties to COTC. These individuals were accused of plotting to instigate a race war by bombing the First African Methodist Episcopal Church_a major Black religious institution in South Central Los Angeles_and by

assassinating Rodney King, the victim of a notorious videotaped beating by white police officers. According to court documents, the King murder was to have taken place on August 4, the sentencing date for two policemen convicted of federal civil rights violations in connection with the beating.

The arrests, which culminated an 18-month investigation of right-wing extremist groups in Southern California, were made three weeks prior to the assassination date because at the time, one of the key suspects was allegedly preparing a letter bomb to be sent to an Orange County rabbi. Additionally, police stated that the alleged conspirators had planned to target leaders of the NAACP and the National Urban League; Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan; the Rev. Al Sharpton, rap music stars Eazy-E and members of the group Public Enemy; as well as unspecified "Jewish leaders."

During the arrests, police seized pipe bombs and machine guns, as well as racist paraphernalia including Confederate and Nazi flags, and a framed portrait of Adolf Hitler. Of the eight people arrested, only one, Christopher David Fisher, was specifically charged with conspiracy to destroy the First A.M.E. church. Five other adults were charged with weapons offenses: Jeremy Rineman, 22; Jill Scarborough, 22; Josh Lee, 23; Chris Nadal, 35; and Doris Nadal, 42. Two unidentified juveniles were also arrested on unspecified charges according to Time magazine, however, one of the minors had been charged with a pipe-bomb attack against a "half Asian and half Mexican" member of the "Spur Posse," a gang of Lakewood, California, teenagers who awarded points among themselves for sexual conquests

Fisher, the son of a grade-school teacher and a computer-science instructor, was the leader of an obscure Skinhead gang, the Fourth Reich Skins. Rineman, an associate of Metzger's White Aryan Resistance, had been featured in WAR, the Metzger monthly tabloid, after he was paralyzed in a brawl with Black and Latino youths Scarborough, Rineman's girlfriend, had written to another Metzger publication, White Sisters, distributed by the Aryan Women's League, in 1991. The couple also wrote COTC's Racial Loyalty together in May 1992, stating, "After searching through many organizations... we are now proud to say that we are new members of a program and creed that will bring about the salvation and redemption of the White Race. As Creators we now know that we can give our all to a real movement that will stop at nothing until we have a Whiter and Brighter World. We are now

working hard to start a strong chapter out here in Southern California. We have started recruiting many of our friends...."

Ironically, among these newly recruited friends, Rineman and Scarborough were responsible for bringing into the COTC the FBI informant who foiled their alleged terroristic plot. A man who_ according to press accounts_ presented himself in extremist circles as "Rev. Joe Allen" wrote in the May 1992 issue of Racial Loyalty, "I would like to express my thanks to Jill and Jeremy VonRineman [sic], our wounded warrior, for showing me to the light of Creativity.... As a newly ordained minister of the COTC. I will dedicate myself to the cause and encourage others to join our movement. I am moving my base of operations to Southern California to work with Jill and Jeremy and others that they have recruited, but I am willing to give assistance wherever it can be used."

After the arrests of Rineman, Scarborough, and their associates, Metzger wrote in WAR that he had suspected Allen's connection to the FBI over three years ago. Perhaps the WAR leader shared his concerns with Rineman, for he and Allen began publicly feuding, though Allen continued to use COTC as the base for his activities. In an issue of Racial Loyalty published only days before the arrests, Allen wrote, "I am continuing to spread the C.O.T.C. philosophy of purifying mind and body for a whiter and brighter California by training and educating young Skinheads at our training center. Unfortunately, a former C O.T.C. associate, who has never accomplished anything for the white race except getting himself shot and paralyzed by a mud, has made himself an obstacle to our success by spreading vicious lies about me in the local area for his own childish motives.... I would like to urge any white patriot who has not contacted me because of something that spoiled brat said about me, to meet with me and let me show them documents I have acquired which prove that these lies are not true."

Current COTC leader Rick McCarty entered into the fray by writing, "Rev. Joe Allen has been a tremendous help to this organization.... In fact, he has never turned down a request from this office. Rev. Joe Allen has always been there for us and he will be there for you...call him...enough said." When questioned about Allen's FBI work in the July 21 issue of The Toronto Sun, McCarty said, "He sent up \$500 [U.S.] to help bail out our group in Toronto.... For an FBI agent he's been a big help. I wish we had 100 more like him."

Nonetheless, McCarty took pains to distance himself from the plot in which his group had become entangled. Denying that he had advocated violence against the African-Americans targeted for assassination. the COTC leader told the NW Florida Daily News, "We support Rodney King because the police that beat him will beat us.... And we support Louis Farrakhan because he's a black separatist." (Ben Klassen had been less enthusiastic in his assessment of the Nation of Islam leader; the July 1989 Racial Loyalty excerpted a wire service article on Farrakhan under the headline, "Do We Really Want to Negotiate With This Nigger?")

Significance of the Skinhead Connection

Members of the Fourth Reich Skins not arrested in connection with the alleged conspiracy also tried to disentangle themselves from the widening gyre of terrorism. In an interview printed in the August 1 Las Vegas Review-Journal, a Skinhead girl explained, "We may have prejudices..but I don't want to start a war." Denials notwithstanding, however, the charges against the eight could signify a disturbing tendency among neo-Nazi Skinheads[1] to act upon more ambitious and organized violent schemes either by working with or by taking inspiration from older, more established hate groups such as WAR and the COTC.

Thus far, only two defendants, Christian and Doris Nadal, have been brought to trial in connection with these charges. On October 1, 1993, Christian Nadal was convicted on 16 counts of selling and transferring illegal weapons, for which he could receive a maximum sentence of 145 years in prison. Doris Nadal, acquitted of three charges, was found guilty on a single conspiracy count, for which she could receive a five year sentence. A ninth defendant, charged after the July 15 arrests, Christopher Berwick, 49, pleaded guilty in late September to conspiring to manufacture and sell approximately 16 Sten machine gun receiver tubes for gun kits provided by Christian Nadal; Berwick faces a maximum sentence of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

As of October 1993, the other six defendants remain in jail awaiting trial.

The Tacoma Plot

On July 26, 1993, police arrested two Washington state residents. Jeremiah Gordon Knesal (a reported leader of the COTC) and Wayne Paul Wooten, both 19, for shoplifting at a mall parking lot in Salinas California During a search of Knesal's car, the

officers uncovered three pipe bombs, four loaded long-barrel weapons, military apparel, ammunition, wigs, climbing gear, white supremacist literature and a page from a Portland, Oregon, telephone book listing Jewish agencies and synagogues.

Under subsequent questioning by the FBI, Knesal confessed to his involvement in the July 20 bombing of an NAACP office in Tacoma, Washington. According to the FBI, Knesal also implicated Mark Frank Kowaalski (aka Mark Stevenson), 24, an ex-convict and member of the Skinhead group American Front, in the Tacoma bombing. Kowaalski was arrested the same day in Seattle and was charged with being a convicted felon in possession of a destructive device. Agents reported that the Skinhead ringleader possessed "physical evidence" linking all three suspects to the bombing.

Authorities stated that the Tacoma firebombing was part of a larger plot to attack Jewish and African American institutions, military installations (particularly those housing submarines), gay and lesbian gathering places, and radio and television stations. The three also reportedly planned to assassinate two rap music performers, Ice Cube and Ice-T.

In addition to Kowaalski's association with American Front, Knesal described himself to the FBI as Washington state director of the Church of the Creator. His COTC membership card was among the white supremacist paraphernalia found at the time of his arrest.

COTC has figured prominently in Northern California recently, too, due to the distribution of Racial Loyalty in Berkeley, Piedmont, and Oakland. In Berkeley, police have speculated publicly that COTC members may be linked to swastika graffiti painted on a Judaica store, "Afikomen," on July 18; on June 27, copies of the COTC pamphlet "On the Brink of a Bloody Race War: With the White Race Targeted for Extinction" were left on the doorsteps of the shop, as well as at several other businesses and homes in the area.

Following the Tacoma bombing, McCarty for the second time in two weeks felt the need to distance himself from the actions of some of his West Coast followers. "These kids are crazy, aren't they" he told The San Francisco Chronicle. "We don't promote any type of violence whatsoever. We do, however, want to repatriate the colored races back to their own countries and stop immigration and so forth. just like the [U.S.] government used to move Indians around. we want to do the same thing."

As of October 1993, the three Skinheads currently remain in police custody awaiting trial; in addition to the charge filed against Kowaalski relating to a "destructive device," Knesal and Wooten have been arraigned on three counts of manufacturing and possessing explosive devices, felony offenses carrying a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine on each count.

The Search for a New High Priest

To round out the picture of COTCs leadership struggle, the following is a review of efforts by Klassen and his chosen successors to maintain control and direction of the organization.

Heirs Apparent: 1-Rudy "Butch" Stanko

Klassen announced in February 1990 that his successor as Pontifex Maximus would be Rudy "Butch" Stanko, whom he described to COTC followers as an "outstanding man, who has been tested by fire and torture, by success and adversity."

Stanko, 46, was at one time owner of the Nebraska Beef Packer and Cattle King companies. He held contracts worth \$20 million to supply over 18 million pounds of ground beef to public school cafeterias until the NBC news program "First Camera" reported in 1983 that the meat was produced under unsanitary conditions. (Racial Loyalty later alleged that the series, since canceled, was "probably set up specifically and for no other reason than to smear and slander Rudy.") The U.S. Departments of Justice and Agriculture then investigated Stanko, and the meat magnate was convicted in 1984 of six violations of the Federal Meat Inspection Act. He was sentenced to six years in prison and ordered to pay a \$70,000 fine.

Stanko apparently came to Klassen's attention while in prison as the author of *The Score*, an intensely anti-Semitic book which details how Stanko's meat-packing corporation was destroyed by a Zionist conspiracy. The 389-page tome opens with an un-Creatorly, though predictably hateful, epigraph: "This book is dedicated to Jesus Christ. He was the first to tell *The Score* about the conspiracy of the Sanhedrin and its followers. For this they crucified him." The book proceeds to cover such topics as "Zionism"; "The Sanhedrin" and "Who Rules America." It concludes with a reprise of the megalomaniacal chestnut, "the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion."

The felonious abattoir operator welcomed his

appointment as Klassen's successor by writing
in the February 1990 Racial Loyalty:

It is a great honor and a supreme challenge to be
selected as the next Pontifex
Maximus of the Church of the Creator.... It is my
avowed purpose to provide the
necessary leadership, organizational and promotional
talents to...smash the
tyrannical Jewish network once and for all time. It is
my hope and dedicated
goal to bring this about in the next decade, the last
decade history has allowed
us for the final showdown.

But, it was not meant to be. Though released from a
federal penitentiary in December 1991,
Stanko was arrested for speeding in his Nebraska hometown on
February 3, 1992. He was also
charged with obstructing a police operation, criminal
mischief, and driving with an expired license.
After being taken to the local jail, Stanko reportedly
wrestled with officers while they attempted to
inventory his property during the booking procedure. He was
then taken to a hospital, where he
broke a light fixture with a crutch; when police entered his
room, Stanko allegedly tried to assault an
officer with the crutch.

The Pontifex Maximus-elect was released on bond the
following evening. Though a February
11, 1992, Ashville Citizen-Times article reported that
Stanko was scheduled to assume COTC
leadership the following month. it also noted that a Montana
parole officer "said Stanko had told him
that he was not interested in taking over the church." The
Scottsbluff, Nebraska, Star-Herald
confirmed in a March 5, 1992. article that "Stanko said
recently he is no longer a reverend in the
church." The Star-Herald added that Stanko had filed a
\$1.375 million lawsuit alleging police
brutality and civil rights violations in connection with his
February arrest. Stanko's lawsuit was
dismissed by a district court on May 29. 1992. He appealed
this decision to the Nebraska Supreme
Court, which upheld the lower court ruling in November 1992.
With respect to the criminal charges
pending against him, Stanko planned to enter a plea bargain
agreement in October 1993, in which he
will be sentenced for misdemeanor destruction of property
and speeding infraction violations.

Shortly after these incidents. it became clear that
Stanko would not be taking over the
leadership of COTC As Klassen scrambled to find a new
successor, he referred to his first attempt as
the "Rudy Stanko fiasco." Stanko nonetheless addressed

another temporary Pontifex Maximus, Mark Wilson, in the November 1992 Racial Loyalty: "I want to congratulate you on being appointed the Pontifex Maximus and the new leader of the CHURCH OF THE CREATOR.... I realize the tremendous responsibility placed on your shoulders, and you have my wholehearted support. If I can be of any assistance in the Rocky Mountain West, please do not hesitate to drop me a line."

Heirs Apparent: 2-Charles Altvater

In early May 1992, Klassen announced that his new successor would be Charles Edward Altvater, 31, of Baltimore, Maryland. Unlike the notorious Stanko, Altvater was almost completely unknown prior to this sudden promotion. His only previous mention in Racial Loyalty was a January 1989 letter to the editor, in which he wrote:

I go back to college in January and will soon have my degree in electronics. The

C.O.T.C. gave me the incentive to make myself successful so I can truly be an

asset to our Cause. I promise to have a Church of the Creator under

construction here within the next 3-5 years and will be spreading Creativity for

the rest of my days.

Last but not least, I'll be getting married later this year and would very much

like Pontifex Maximus [Klassen] to perform the services....

Only a month after the Altvater appointment, Klassen changed his mind, naming Mark Wilson, a Milwaukee Skinhead, as the new Pontifex Maximus. According to Klassen, Altvater accepted the demotion without rancor.

Apparently still intent on spreading the work of "Creativity," Altvater came to public attention once more on December 14, 1992, when he was indicted in Baltimore on 16 criminal counts, including attempted murder, reckless endangerment, possession and manufacture of explosives, and destruction of property. According to the indictment, Altvater allegedly placed a bomb on the porch of a Baltimore County police officer's home; he was also alleged to have bombed a state police car on the same day. There were no reported injuries in either explosion.

A search of Altvater's home later revealed 92 quarter sticks of dynamite. He currently is serving two sentences in connection with the incidents: a 5-year term for reckless endangerment and a 20-

year sentence (seven years of which were suspended) relating to the pipe bombing charges.

Heirs Apparent: 3-Mark Wilson (aka Brandon O'Rourke)

Mark Wilson, 25, first came to the attention of observers of the radical right as a member of the Wisconsin Skinhead gang SHAM_Skinhead Army of Milwaukee_also referred to as the Northern Hammerskins. He was introduced to Racial Loyalty subscribers as Klassen's successor in June 1992 under the new name "Brandon O'Rourke"; the adoption of one or various pseudonyms by COTC members is quite common, as it is for many in the white supremacist movement, and it offers individuals the obvious advantage of eluding, at least temporarily, the scrutiny of law enforcement.

Under Wilson/"O'Rourke's" six-month tenure, the Church of the Creator published only two issues of Racial Loyalty, neither of which showed the rhetorical intensity or palpable rage the tabloid exhibited under Klassen, but the local organization reportedly re-energized the Milwaukee Skinhead scene. Wilson also established a close relationship with the growing COTC presence in Canada, particularly in the Toronto area.

Perhaps sensing, rightly though belatedly, that the Milwaukee Skinheads' propensity for reckless behavior would spin out of his ability to control, Klassen abruptly dismissed Wilson as COTC chief in January 1993. Unlike Stanko or Altvater, however, Wilson, who was the first Klassen-successor to actually take control of the "religion," did not go gently into the good-night of hate-group obscurity. According to the Klanwatch Intelligence Report, Wilson loyalists even attempted a last minute "coup" against the new, and current, leader, Rick McCarty, during an early meeting with him at a Milwaukee hotel. The plan was accidentally thwarted when police arrested three members of the Wilson faction on concealed weapons charges in the hotel parking lot.

Though Wilson's effort to retain power failed, he remains active and disgruntled. After his falling out with Klassen, the former Skinhead spread rumors of the COTC founder's senility, and he reportedly even asked WAR leader Tom Metzger to take control of the group; Metzger, who eulogized Klassen in an August 16, 1993, phone message, has shown no inclination to grant Wilson's alleged request.

Heir Apparent:4-Rick McCarty

Richard Lane McCarty. 39, was utterly unknown in hate

group circles before Klassen announced in January 1993 that he would take over COTC, and that its headquarters were moving to Niceville, Florida, a tiny community near the Gulf Coast resort town of Pensacola. McCarty's professional background apparently includes a career in telemarketing; Klassen's introductory letter alleges that the new leader had earned a Ph.D., and had a background in business and psychology. However, court records reportedly indicate that McCarty was arrested in 1985 on charges, since dropped, that he operated a telemarketing scam in Birmingham, Alabama, by claiming to sell distributorships for a soft drink company.

In March 1993, McCarty sent letters to Racial Loyalty subscribers announcing that he would appear that month on the nationally syndicated Sally Jessy Raphael talk show. The letters stated: "See Dr. McCarty P.M. and Executive Director of the C.O.T.C. fight it out with the Jews and Muds. Even though the show was stacked with half-breeds, gays and muds Dr. McCarty held his own and pulled no punches.... We now have a leader to carry us into battle with the enemy. RAHOWA."

McCarty did appear on the program with three fellow white supremacists: former Ku Klux Klansman Scott Shephard; Kirk Lyons, a one-time National Alliance member who heads CAUSE, a white supremacist legal defense agency; and an unidentified Skinhead woman and Christian "Identity" adherent. These extremists were joined by a handful of comparably benighted Black separatists.

Though it is doubtful that McCarty made much of a national impact as a result of his television debut, local newspapers began taking note of the white supremacist in their midst the following summer. A July 17, 1993, NW Florida Daily News article reported that McCarty was stopped by Niceville police on July 1, and charged with driving under the influence of alcohol. The Pontifex Maximus refused to sign his citation and is reportedly still contesting the charge.

The Palm Beach Post quoted McCarty on August 2, 1993, using rhetoric more subdued than Klassen's. He told the paper, "People are finally waking up to the fact that the white man is going to have no country of his own. We don't have nothing against anybody. We just want to repatriate the blacks and Jews back to their countries of origin." The Post also reported that COTC has no temple or compound in Niceville, "but it does have a warehouse that holds \$500,000 in white supremacist

pamphlets, newspapers and books. They are distributed in all 50 states, and 37 foreign countries, McCarty said."

McCarty's most recent letter to Racial Loyalty subscribers was a eulogy of Ben Klassen. McCarty wrote:
[Typographical and spelling errors in original]

Three weeks ago Mr. Klassen came to visit with me in Niceville, Florida. To chart were the COTC had been and where we are going in the future. Even though we converse on the phone a couple of times a week, we had not physically seen each other since January.

When Mr. Klassen arrived and stepped out of his car I held out my hand to him. Mr. Klassen surprised me by pushing my hand away and gave me a big bear hug instead.... It was at that time I became aware of the bond we had formed, of the dreams and aspirations that we shared. Many times I have asked myself why I would take over such an awesome task and headaches of running the COTC? Each the time the same answer echoes back, "Mr. Ben Klassen".

...I am still unable at this time to say good-bye to Ben.... Ben came into my life like a coma, lit up the sky, and then moved on.

Next month we will have some articles going back to our roots so as not to lose track of who we are, where we are going, and the goals we plan to accomplish. Every ending has a new beginning_Lets begin.

More COTC Violence: The Saga of George David Loeb

On May 17, 1991, George Loeb, 36, a COTC "reverend," killed Petty Officer 3rd Class Harold J. Mansfield, Jr., 22, an African-American Persian Gulf War veteran from Oklahoma city, Oklahoma. The murder took place in the parking lot of a shopping center in Neptune Beach, Florida, where the two individuals lived.

According to press accounts at the time of the murder, the incident occurred when Loeb's car made a left turn into the parking lot, almost sideswiping Mansfield's car, which was backing out. Trouble began when Mansfield honked his horn at Loeb; an argument ensued, but Mansfield pulled away. Loeb then pulled into a convenience store, where, while buying two six-packs of beer, he

handed the cashier a business card that read "White People Awaken. Save the White Race." The cashier told reporters that Loeb had also angrily shouted his racist views throughout the store.

The whole incident might have ended there, but Mansfield tragically decided to return to the parking lot. accompanied by a friend and armed with a brick, to confront Loeb. When Mansfield and the COTC member saw one another, their argument resumed. Mansfield brought out his brick; Loeb produced a .25-caliber semiautomatic handgun. According to newspaper accounts, Mansfield retreated at this point, but Loeb fired a single bullet into Mansfield's chest, blowing the veteran back into his car.

Loeb continued to fire his gun, apparently at Mansfield's companion, who was running toward the grocery store to call for help. By the time the man returned to the car, Mansfield was already near death. "I was telling him [Mansfield] not to die on me," he told reporters. "He was my best friend."

Though this was certainly the most graphic manifestation of Loeb's COTC-derived racist philosophy, it was not the first. In November 1990, he had been arrested after an African-American woman told police that she and her daughter had been followed by Loeb, who had called the woman a racist name and had threatened to shoot her. The following January, he reportedly started a fistfight with a Black neighbor the morning after he had been arrested on charges of disorderly intoxication and resisting arrest. During this period, the tenant association at Loeb's condominium complex attempted unsuccessfully to have him and his wife evicted. "The tense situation can only get worse, culminating in possible violent action," the tenants wrote to Loeb's landlord.

Loeb himself had recorded his violent beliefs in a number of writings over the years. For example, only seven weeks before the murder, he wrote a letter to The Fort Pierce Tribune, in which he stated:

To you, your readers and all of those quoted [in a Tribune article]. let me just say
this_WAKE UP! There is no need to judge each individual nigger. We do
not have the time.... It is your obvious intention to reinforce the mistaken
impressions of the ignorant. This is to the detriment of the besieged white
community. It is also why we publish and distribute Racial Loyalty: to offset the

deliberate lies and distortions of the jewish [sic] media and to motivate White people to clean up this mess themselves since they cannot count on you, your paper or your police for any help.

Loeb had also once told a reporter that, "The only thing they [Blacks] can do is get'in my face, and that's a mistake.... If my back's against the wall, I won't run. I have to do what I have to do." In all, police seized 1,600 pages of personal correspondence and racist propaganda from Loeb's apartment, of which only 15 pages were introduced at his trial; according to news accounts, the most significant of these documents was a handwritten note to a member of the Ku Klux Klan in which Loeb advised: "The frequent use of the word nigger should lead to a widespread and violent black uprising that should give whites (and possibly police) the opportunity to kill large numbers of them with impunity. It is our feeling as Creators [i.e., COTC members] that shrinking the numbers of blacks worldwide is one of the highest priorities."

Within hours of the killing, Loeb and his wife Barbara, 31, had moved out of their condominium, and had fled the state. Though police reported that Barbara Loeb was spotted two weeks later in Wisconsin, where members of her family lived, the fugitive couple was arrested on June 6, 1991, in Poughkeepsie, New York. Police tracked the two down to a grocery store where Loeb had allegedly assaulted a security guard who had caught him trying to steal a \$3.35 package of turkey breast. When the arriving officers searched the Loeb's car, they found two smoke bombs, a .22-caliber rifle with a scope and extra magazines, a 12 gauge shotgun, and approximately one thousand rounds of assorted ammunition. Additionally, Barbara Loeb's purse contained a handgun and ammunition.

The Law Catches Up with the Loeb's

Barbara Loeb was sentenced to one year in jail on weapons possession charges; she served at least nine months of her term in New York State. George Loeb was extradited to Florida in December 1991 to face murder charges for killing Mansfield. During the trial, which began the following July, Loeb chimed that he was acting in self-defense when he shot the sailor; he also told jurors that he had considered fleeing to Canada because it is a "predominantly white country," where he might expect to be treated more impartially. Regardless, on July 29, a jury of nine whites and three African-Americans, after only three hours of deliberation, found Loeb guilty of first-degree murder.

The night after his conviction, Loeb attempted suicide by slashing his forearms with the blade of a disposable razor included in his prison toiletries kit. By the time police discovered his injuries, apparently only minutes after he inflicted them, Loeb had lost 20% of his blood, and had gone into shock. A police report stated that Loeb told officers while his wounds were being treated that, "I want to die because the whole world is an asshole." As a result of his suicide attempt, Loeb's sentencing was moved up one week, to August 12; he received a life sentence with no chance of parole for 25 years.

Members of the COTC predictably hailed Loeb as a hero and martyr. The August 1991 edition of *Racial Loyalty*, for example, printed a letter from "A Pro-White Activist" under the heading "Self-Defense is Our Right" which stated: "[Loeb was supposed to have been just another non-publicized statistic in the wave of the black/mud/Jew criminal terror against Whites_how evil and racist of him to spoil The Plan. SELF-DEFENSE is our right, and they will never be able to destroy us Whites if we keep pulling these stunts"]' In the same issue, the tabloid reprinted a Tampa Tribune account of the murder under the headline, "More publicity for the COTC! White Man, spread the word of Creativity. Words are powerful weapons."

At least publicly. however, Klassen shrank from connecting his organization with the Loeb murder. By most accounts, it was this incident in particular which motivated the Pontifex Maximus's desperate attempts to disentangle himself from the COTC. Indeed, when questioned on the subject by Miabella, Klassen said, "I am no more responsible for that than the pope is responsible for all the Catholic felons in prison.... Not at all." The reporter interviewing Klassen then pointed out that another COTC member, Steve Thomas, who was charged with aiding and abetting Loeb's flight from Florida, was currently living at the North Carolina compound. "Oh," Klassen replied, "He's leaving tomorrow."

Steve Thomas

The first person arrested in connection with the murder of Harold Mansfield was Steve Gabott Thomas, 47, who was charged in late May 1991 with being an accessory after the fact_a felony potentially carrying a sentence of five years in prison_in the slaying. Thomas, a boatyard worker, was apparently the only other member of the COTC in Loeb's community. According to police,

Thomas helped Loeb pack to leave town, then told detectives he hadn't seen the assailant. He was then booked into the Duval County Jail under a \$100,000 bond.

Thomas pleaded guilty and was sentenced to a year's probation in August 1992. He reportedly received the light sentence in exchange for providing information to law enforcement which indirectly assisted in Loeb's capture.

Despite his alleged "ratting" against Loeb, Thomas remained prominent in COTC circles. In early 1992, he served as editor of Racial Loyalty, using the pseudonym "Max Yeager." When Klassen temporarily appointed Mark Wilson as Pontifex Maximus, Thomas moved to Milwaukee, where he shared an apartment with the 24-year old Wilson.

Another significant incident in Thomas's biography resurfaced at the time of the Loeb murder trial. According to the Florida Times-Union, Thomas had been one of four Army soldiers charged with the rape and murder of a Vietnamese woman, Phan Thi Mao, in 1966. (This crime formed the basis for Brian De Palma's 1989 film, Casualties of War.) Thomas was convicted for the rape/murder in 1976, and sentenced to life in prison. However, on appeal the sentence was reduced to eight years, based on Thomas's "good military record"; he eventually served four years.

Beyond the Horizon: The COTC Abroad

COTC activists have established ties with violent extremists in countries as widespread as Canada, Sweden, England, and South Africa. To illustrate the nature of these foreign connections, the following is an examination of COTC activities in two of these countries.

Canada

As is the case with the COTC on the U.S. West Coast, the Church of the Creator in Canada for the most part is comprised of neo-Nazi Skinheads. The group became active in Canada in 1990 when it set up post office boxes in Scarborough, Agincourt, and Woodbridge, Ontario. The head of these Ontario chapters is George Burdi (aka Rev. Eric Hawthorne). Burdi, 23, is a college-educated Skinhead; his menacing looks and relative sophistication have earned him appearances on the Geraldo Rivera and Sally Jessy Raphael talk shows, as well as MTV News. In addition to his COTC affiliation, Burdi is active with Heritage Front_Canada's most notorious hate group, led by

Wolfgang Droege. (Droege is an ex-convict and former member of David Duke's Knights of the Ku Klux Klan who in 1992 sponsored rallies at which WAR leader Tom Metzger and his lieutenant Dennis Mahon spoke.) Burdi has been credited by Canadian law enforcement and other observers of the radical right with bringing a younger, more militant contingent into the more established hate group. Burdi also serves as lead singer of the Skinhead rock group RaHoWa (the term, taken from "racial holy war," which is the COTC slogan).

Burdi spoke of his music career in the August 18, 1993, Toronto Star: "Music is the ultimate form of bringing a message to the masses.... Youth seek role models through musicians. They say, 'Wow, I love this band and if this is the opinion of the band, then it is my opinion too.'" The self-styled performing artist has shown no reticence in expressing his opinions through the vehicle of song. One of his biggest crowd pleasers is a racist re-write of the Nancy Sinatra tune, "These Boots Arc Made for Walkin." In RaHoWa's rendition, Burdi squawks, "These boots are made for stompin'/. And that's just what they'll do/One of these days these boots/Are gonna stomp all over Jews."

To distribute RaHoWa's medleys of hate, which blatantly violate Canada's strict anti-racist laws, Burdi established Resistance Records, a music label comparable to France's marketers of Skinhead music, Rebelles Europeens_RaHoWa's former label_and Germany's Rock-o-Rama.[2] Resistance Records is operated by a COTC member in Detroit, Michigan. (Canada's statutes prohibiting publication of hate propaganda also account for Burdi's loyalty to COTC, because without Racial Loyalty, he would have no means of publishing or disseminating his propaganda north of the border.) Resistance Records has also signed the racist bands Nordic Thunder, Aggravated Assault, Aryan, and the Voice. "The market's phenomenal," Burdi told the Toronto Star. "We have a monopoly on it and it's virtually untapped." He astutely added that Canada's restrictions on hate speech could inadvertently spread the music's appeal. "Music is fed on controversy. Ignore us and we get huge because we can develop unhindered. Attack us and we get huge because you create controversy and the youth want to hear us. Either way, we win."

Burdi, moreover, is one of the most regular contributors to Racial Loyalty; over the past two years, regardless of who was serving as "Pontifex Maximus," Burdi's letters and essays_printed under the "Hawthorne" alias_have appeared in virtually every issue of the tabloid.

Not content with "mere" hate speech, however, Burdi has organized his followers, who number approximately three to four dozen, into the most active and dangerous COTC faction in North America. To this end, the group conducts weekly paramilitary sessions under the direction of COTC "Security" chief Eric Fischer, 29, a former member of the elite Canadian Forces Airborne Regiment. Fischer's training program is reportedly so grueling that in 1992 one COTC recruit collapsed and died; no charges were filed in connection with the incident.

The law appears to have caught up with Fischer, however, as a result of his bizarre effort to avenge the alleged theft of a computer, complete with extremist mailing lists and correspondence from a fellow extremist. In the early morning hours of June 9, 1993, police arrested the COTC officer, along with his brother, Elkar (aka Carl) Fischer, 22, and Drew Maynard, 21, charging the three with kidnapping, forcible confinement, and assault causing bodily harm for their alleged role in abducting a Heritage Front member whom they suspected of stealing the computer. Carl Fischer and Maynard were additionally charged with threatening death and bodily harm.

This criminal episode, which graphically illustrates the violence-prone nature of the group, began when the victim of these acts was reportedly taken on a three-hour ride through metropolitan Toronto, during which, he told police, he was handcuffed and tied, thrown on top of a sleeping bag in the back of a white van, and beaten. His assailants also placed a plastic bag over his head, and allegedly threatened to inject him with a poisonous cleaning solution: Beaten, bleeding, and disoriented, the victim was dropped off by his abductors at St. Michael's Hospital.

At approximately one o'clock the following morning, police surrounded the four-bedroom bungalow that was home to the three suspects, as well as George Burdi and two other COTC members, and took the accused men into custody. Law enforcement agents also seized a 12-gauge shotgun, a .22-caliber pistol, and a .45-caliber semi-automatic handgun during the arrest. The three accused are currently out on bail_\$500 of which was provided by FBI agent "Joe Allen," the COTC member who later provided evidence leading to the arrest of nine white supremacists in Los Angeles.

Meanwhile, as a result of these charges, the two Fischer brothers have been suspended from the Queen's Own Rifles reserve militia until the resolution of

the criminal investigation against them. Additionally, the Canadian military's special investigation unit is looking into claims by Wolfgang Droege that more than two dozen Heritage Front members currently serve in the armed forces.

George Burdi himself has been the subject of criminal charges in connection with a street brawl between the COTC and anti-racist activists which occurred on June 18, 1993. According to police, Alicia Reckzin, 23, a member of the group Anti-Racist Action, received a concussion, a broken nose, and bruises when Burdi allegedly assaulted her outside the Chateau Laurier hotel in Ottawa. Burdi currently awaits trial, accused of assault causing bodily harm. A voice reportedly "described as Burdi's" recorded a description of the fight for the Heritage Front telephone line; in the recording he referred to a "tremendous victory last night."

South Africa

According to the February 1992 edition of Searchlight, an "anti-fascist" magazine in Great Britain, two self-professed members of the Civil Cooperation Bureau (CCB), an undercover unit of the South African security police, fled to England after awaiting trial for over a year in connection with the bombing of a taxi line which injured 15 Black people. The two fugitives, Adrian Maritz and Henry Martin, reported that as CCB operatives, they were instructed by superiors to join the Church of the Creator in order to recruit South African racists into a "dirty war" against the African National Congress (ANC). The two COTC members also alleged that they had knowledge of "several operations through which large quantities of arms were delivered to the Zulu Inkatha Party"; the security force is reputed to have used armed Inkatha members in a "campaign of atrocities" waged in Black townships.

Nelson Mandela, the leader of the ANC, had visited the two men in a South African hospital after they had gone on a hunger strike to protest their arrests. He declared himself "convinced they have very valuable information about the role of the National Intelligence Service and military intelligence, who instructed them to commit some heinous offences."

To date, further developments regarding these allegations remain unclear.

Nonetheless, Searchlight also reported in the same issue that two other COTC activists, Jurgen Matthews White and Johannes Jurgens Grobbelaar, were killed

in a gun battle with South African police while they were reportedly attempting to smuggle weapons and explosives into an alleged "survivalist" compound in Namibia. The two "Creators" were stopped by police suspicious that their vehicle had been stolen. According to the report, while being escorted to a nearby police station, the two detonated a smoke bomb and attempted to escape. After coming across their abandoned vehicle five miles away, police came under fire from the two suspects, who lay in ambush. Two officers were shot, one fatally, before law enforcement agents returned fire. The COTC members died in the gun battle.

Conclusion

The Church of the Creator in recent years has become one of the most militant and volatile groups in the white supremacist underworld. Its anti-religious, anti-democratic, and violently and-social philosophy make the organization a natural haven for young Skinheads, while its nominal status as a "church" offers a thin veneer of respectability_and, on occasion, tax breaks_for older "reverends."

Though its international following probably numbers well under 1000, the potential for destructive behavior inherent in a belief system organized around "racial holy war" has recently become all too obvious. In Florida last year, COTC "Rev." George Loeb was convicted of first-degree murder. In South Africa, two COTC members were killed in a shoot out with police; two other COTC members alleged that undercover South African intelligence agents had recruited "Creators" to wage a "dirty war" against the African National Congress.

This year, amid COTC founder Ben Klassen's desperate search for a successor (which led him to consider an ex-convict, and a neo Nazi Skinhead, among others), police in Las Angeles uncovered an alleged conspiracy implicating COTC members in a scheme to blow up one of the city's largest Black churches. Only days later, FBI agents charged that the bombing of a Tacoma, Washington, office of the NAACP had been perpetrated by a local COTC leader.

COTC members have even been responsible for violence against fellow hatemongers. After Klassen abruptly dismissed Milwaukee Skinhead Mark Wilson as leader of the "Church," supporters of Wilson reportedly planned to use firepower to force Wilson's successor, Rick McCarty, to relinquish control of the group. Police narrowly averted violence by arresting the individuals on concealed

weapons charges in the parking lot of the hotel where the "coup" was to have been staged. In Canada, just weeks before the Los Angeles plot and the Tacoma bombing came to public attention, three Toronto members of the COTC were charged with assaulting and threatening with death a rival member of the hate group Heritage Front.

Clearly, such a legacy of violence, and the potential for more, must concern law enforcement agencies and private citizens alike. However, the future status of the Church of the Creator remains unclear. With Klassen's suicide, the group has lost its driving force, and its principal financial backer. Thus far, McCarty has shown neither the perverse gift nor the relish for uncompromising, nihilistic rhetoric which so distinguished Klassen among hate propagandists. It is also reasonable to speculate _though only time, of course, will tell_that the prominence of federal informants in exposing COTC links to the Los Angeles plot will further dilute the appeal of the group.

Nonetheless, both COTC members and COTC propaganda have made an indelible impact on the white supremacist scene in the last few years. Recently, McCarty alleged that he maintained a warehouse of \$500,000 worth of pamphlets, newspapers, and books; he further claimed that COTC membership ranges over all 50 states, and 37 foreign countries. Whatever its actual size, COTCs calls for "Racial Holy War" must be taken seriously by a public alert to the threat of ethnic conflict exploited by hateful fanatics.

Footnotes:

1. According to the 1993 ADL Special Report, "Young Nazi Killers - Rising Skinhead Danger," neo-Nazi Skinheads number 3,500 in 40 states and are responsible for at least 22 murders since July 1990.
2. See the 1992 ADL Special Report , "Sounds of Hate: Neo-Nazi Rock Music from Germany."

